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The University of Dayton

News Release

March 24, 1993
Contact: Pam Huber

BRITISH 'GUTTER PRESS' DISPLAYS DISTINCTIVE GRAPHICS

DAYTON, Ohio — The "gutter press" in England draws more daily readers than mainstream newspapers, and it could be because of graphic design, says Larry Lain, associate professor of communication at the University of Dayton.

"If you look at the relative space devoted to headlines and photos, the popular press seems to believe 'the more the better,'" says Lain, who notes that British papers sell much better than U.S. newspapers. "In England, readers number 415 per 1,000. In the United States, that figure is 260 per 1,000." Lain will present his research at the combined convention for the Popular Culture Association and the American Culture Association April 7-10 in New Orleans.

The quality newspapers, such as the *Times*, *Guardian* and *Independent*, are "conservative in look if not politics" while the popular press, such as the *Mirror*, *Sun*, *Star* and the "absolutely lurid" *Daily Sport*, are distinguished by graphics as well as content, Lain says.

Lain compared a week's worth of issues of the *Times* and the *Mirror*. The *Times* devoted 38 percent of its front page to stories, 23 percent to photos and 12 percent to headlines. The *Mirror's* front page was 5 percent stories, 35 percent photos and 27 percent headlines. A *Times* story, on average, was three times as long as a *Mirror* story.

Although Lain did not specifically study the content of the newspapers, he did notice one difference that may have a bearing on circulation. "The *Times* would never consider running a nude photograph, while the popular press runs photos of topless women every day of the week."

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NOTE TO EDITORS: For media interviews, call Larry Lain at UD at (513) 229-2742 or at home at (513) 252-5237. Lain is a resident of Dayton's Ohmer Park neighborhood.

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